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Minutemen Leader, Aide Are Captured

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M., July 13 (UPI)—The founder of the militant Minutemen organization, Robert Boliver De Pugh, who has been hiding for more than a year to avoid Federal prosecution, was jailed today on charges of plotting a series of bank robberies to finance his self-styled "last line of defense against communism."

FBI agents arrested the 46-year-old Missourian along with Walter Patrick Peyson, 27, an associate, at the small community of Williamsburg, near Truth or Consequences, N.M., where De Pugh had his underground headquarters for the past several months.

The two were heavily armed, but the FBI said they "were given no opportunity to resist."

"De Pugh and Peyson were allegedly checking out a suspicious car which was in the neighborhood when we took them from the rear at gunpoint," said FBI special agent Thomas Jordon, who headed the arresting officers. "We relieved them of all their guns and all were fully loaded. There wasn't a shot fired."

De Pugh and Peyson had been fugitives since Feb. 20, 1968, when they were indicted by a Federal grand jury at Seattle, Wash., on charges of conspiracy to rob four banks at Redmond and Des Moines, Wash.

The FBI statement, over the name of Director J. Edgar Hoover, said "the loot from the proposed robberies was allegedly to be used to finance the activities of the Minutemen, a secret, militant, anti-Communist organization which reportedly planned a violent revolution 'when the Communists take over this country.'"

See DEPUGH, A10, Col. 2

Minutemen Leader And Aide Captured

DEPUGH, From A1

De Pugh and Peyson were brought here early today, arraigned before U.S. Commissioner Robert W. McCoy and were jailed in lieu of bond set at $150,000 for the Minutemen Chief and $20,000 for his companion.

The FBI said the two men, captured in a pickup truck on U.S. Rte. 85 in mountainous southern New Mexico, had an automatic pistol, a telescope-equipped rifle and a snub-nosed .38-caliber pistol. They also were carrying "a quantity of money and ammunition" and identification papers listing their aliases, Ralph Cooper for De Pugh and Jim Cooper for Peyson.

The conspiracy charges against the two grew out of the arrest of seven men in the Seattle area in January, 1968, in connection with the reported bank robbery plot. The maximum penalty on conviction would be five years in prison and a $10,000 fine.

De Pugh, a manufacturing chemist with headquarters at Norborne, Mo., founded the Minutemen ten years ago, and by 1961 the organization had begun to attract attention as its members conducted guerrilla war training in several areas of the country. By 1964, De Pugh estimated membership at 25,000.

In its newsletter "On Target," the Minutemen appealed on Nov. 12, 1966, for conservatives to join the "underground army" to train as "America's last line of defense against communism."

The conspiracy charge was not De Pugh's first trouble with authorities. He, Peyson and another man were convicted Jan. 17, 1967, of violating the Federal Firearms Act.

In 1966, 19 persons described as Minutemen by New York police were arrested on charges that they planned to firebomb three rural camps run by groups the organization considered left-wing, as well as a campaign headquarters of Dr. Herbert Aptheker, a Communist then running for Congress.

ROBERT B. DE PUGH
... fugitive seized